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Virginia Politics.

SPEECH

OF

HON. JAMES H. PLATT,

OF VIRGINIA,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

APRIL 6, 1872.

WASHINGTON:
F. & J. RIVES & GEO. A. BAILEY,
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1872.

Virginia Politics.

The House having met for debate as in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. PLATT said:

Mr. SPEAKER: On the 6th of March, the House being in Committee of the Whole on the deficiency bill, my colleague from the fifth district of Virginia moved to strike out the section appropriating $1,000,000 for expenses of United States courts, and supported his proposed amendment by remarks in which he charged that under cover of the beneficent laws passed by a loyal Congress for the protection of voters, intimidation and persecution were being used by the Radical party to deprive citizens of Virginia of the right to freely exercise the privilege of voting, and that not an election passed in the State without some of its best citizens being persecuted, not prosecuted, under the provisions of this act.

Sir, the old fable of the wolf and the lamb is familiar to us all. That instance is more than paralleled when a Virginia Democrat charges here or elsewhere that the Republicans of Virginia are guilty of using intimidation to prevent Democrats from voting as their consciences may dictate. I could not permit his remarks to pass unchallenged, and in the five minutes I was under the rules permitted to occupy I endeavored to show that his charges against the party of which I am a member were unfounded and unsupported by facts, but that on the contrary the Democratic party of Virginia had been guilty of fraud, intimidation, and wrong in their efforts to gain and retain political power in the State, mentioning such instances as occurred to me at the moment and were familiar to me from personal knowledge, or acquired from other sources and believed by me to be true.

No reply was made to my remarks at the time, but on the 16th of March following, my colleague from the seventh district of Virginia obtained permission to print some remarks, which appeared in the Globe of the 17th, and the publication of which has, in my opinion, rendered it necessary that I should on this occasion—the first since the publication of his remarks when I have been able to obtain the floor—present the evidence upon which I based my previous statements, and show the House that the charges made by me in my remarks on the 6th of March last were fully warranted and justified by the facts. It is an old saying that when one shoots into a flock of ducks the hurt birds flutter. Judging from the commotion in the Virginia Democracy as evinced by the comments of the Democratic papers of the State, the speech of my colleague, and the letters of his correspondents, the chance shot made by me in my previous remarks struck a sore spot in his party; and in order to prejudice the people of Virginia and weaken any impression I might otherwise have made upon them, I have been charged with attacking the people of Virginia and slandering them from my place in the Congress of the United States. I indignantly deny this charge. The people of Virginia are my people as much as they are my colleague's. I yield to no Representative my State has in either branch of Congress in my devotion to and love for my State and its people, nor in the zeal I have shown, and which, so long as I have the honor to occupy my present position, I shall continue to show for her every interest. I stand here just as much entitled to speak for her people as any of my associates.

I invite a scrutinizing, searching examination of my record as a Representative since the people of the second district first sent me here, and challenge any man to point out one instance where I have failed in an earnest, painstaking fidelity to the interests of my people, or a conscientious performance of the duties properly pertaining to my position. I have made no charge against the people of Virginia; I have none to make; but I have made charges against the Democratic party of Virginia, and I now reiterate and reaffirm all the charges against that corrupt, unscrupulous, cowardly party of false pretenses, that I have ever made, and declare my earnest conviction that not one hundredth part of the atrocities and villainies it has perpetrated in Virginia will ever be brought to light until the guilty actors are arraigned before that great judgment

seat to which we must all come at last, and made to answer there for their crimes.

My colleague has selected from my previous remarks the portions to which he specially excepts, and which he commenced seeking evidence to refute as early as the 7th of March. As he has chosen to make them a test of the correctness of my statements, I accept his challenge, and will stand or fall in the judgment of this House as I succeed or fail in sustaining my previous charges, even giving the evidence he adduces in the form of letters from the mayor of Richmond and the gentleman who represents the city of Norfolk in the Virginia senate the same force given to the sworn statements I shall adduce in support of my charges against the Democracy. He quotes me as follows:

"And I do say further, that the party which is represented on this floor by the gentleman who has just spoken, having had the control of the State of Virginia, have by their acts in every possible way, except by an organized Ku Klux system, intimidated voters and kept them from exercising the rights which the laws of this country declared they should have." * * * * * * * * *

"I wish to call the attention of the committee to an act passed by the Legislature of Virginia only a few weeks ago, and I challenge the history of this or any other country to produce a parallel to it. In the city of Norfolk, in my district, there is a considerable Republican majority, but by an unholy gerrymandering, the Legislature have thrown all the Republican majority into one part of the city, so that the common council is equally divided. We have in the council six Republicans and six Democrats. Of course, in these circumstances, nothing could be done. Everything was at a deadlock. There were Republican officers selected by the previous Republican council and by the people. Well, what did the Legislature of Virginia do? They passed a law giving one of the men in the council two votes, so that by one vote he could produce a tie and then give a casting and deciding vote; and today we have presented the spectacle of six men with seven votes—a state of things produced by the Legislature of Virginia to enable them to carry out partisan ends and to eject from office the Republicans elected by the people.

"Now, let me ask the gentleman to carry his mind back to the period two years ago, when in the city of Richmond G. W. Chahoon was elected mayor. It was supposed by his party that they were absolutely certain of carrying the city; but when the ballots came to be counted on the night of the election they found to their astonishment that the Republican party had carried the city of Richmond. But what did they do? The law of Virginia requires that after the ballots are counted they shall be put in a box, and that that box shall be carried by the officers of election and deposited with the clerk of the court. The next morning after the election, while the officer of election of one of the wards was proceeding with the box containing the ballots to deposit them with the clerk of the court, he was attacked in broad daylight in the streets of Richmond by men in disguise, the box taken, and its contents scattered to the winds.

"And although the result of the election was on record, signed by every officer of election, the judges of election, when they came to make the count, threw out the votes of that ward on the ground that the law had not been complied with, because the votes had not been deposited with the clerk of the court. And the gentleman's party to-day, as the fruit of that villainy, are holding in defiance of the majority of the voters of Richmond all the offices of that city. They do so in consequence of that violation of law and justice committed in broad daylight in the city of Richmond, and for which no living man has ever been punished in any way or manner."

* * * * * * *

"Now, I charge that all over Virginia, at every election held there since the war, since the passage of the reconstruction acts, these things have occurred. What do you see to-day in the city of Norfolk? Whenever an election occurs there, in defiance of a law which says there shall be no distinction, they have two ballot-boxes, one for the white men and one for the colored men. The election officers take fifteen minutes or half an hour to take the vote of a colored man, while a white man votes in thirty seconds. At every election in Norfolk and in Richmond when the polls close there are hundreds of colored men standing on the street who have been deprived of the right to vote by the action of the officers of the election delaying them in that way."

I was compelled to leave the city on the same evening on which I made these remarks and was unable to correct them before their publication in the Globe, and I was reported incorrectly in two particulars. First, the word Norfolk in the second paragraph should be Portsmouth. This my colleague should have been familiar enough with affairs in Virginia to have known. Secondly, I did not intend to say or to be understood as saying that all colored men were delayed fifteen minutes or half an hour in voting; but that this was done in many instances needlessly, and for the purpose of delaying and preventing the deposit of Republican votes. With these corrections, I now, with a full knowledge of the responsibility I assume, reiterate the charges made in the extract I have just read, and declare on my honor as a man and my responsibility as a Representative that I believe they are true, and that they not only do not exaggerate, but that they fail to convey any adequate idea of the enormities and crimes committed by the Democratic party in Virginia.

The very evidence adduced by my colleague proves their truth, and I am astonished that he failed to see in reading the letters of his correspondents how clearly they corroborated my statements in the most important particulars. My colleague says in relation to the extracts from my former remarks given above:

"Mr. Braxton. It will be observed that the foregoing extracts contain charges against the city of Norfolk, the city of Richmond, the Legislature of Virginia, and the Conservative party throughout the entire State. It is charged first in regard to the Legislature of Virginia, that there were six Republicans and six Democrats in the council of Norfolk city; and that the Virginia Legislature passed a law giving one man two votes, one to produce a tie, the second to be used as a casting and deciding vote; second, that the judges of election in Norfolk take from fifteen minutes to half an hour to vote a negro, and only thirty seconds to vote a white man. In reply to these charges I ask permission to have read the following letter received on Thursday last from Colonel Walter H. Taylor, the present senator from Norfolk city in the Virginia Legislature.

"The Clerk read as follows:

Richmond, Virginia, *March* 13, 1872.

Dear Sir: I have but this moment returned to Richmond after an absence of several days, and find

your two letters of the 7th and 12th instant. This will explain why you have not sooner had an answer. In regard to the matter first mentioned: the council of the city of Portsmouth consists of twelve members, six from each of two wards. One ward sent Conservative and the other Republican members, so that the council stood six to six. For a long time no organization could be effected. No president nor clerk could be elected, and, indeed, nothing at all done which was calculated to draw party lines. Finally a compromise was made; it was agreed that the Conservatives should have the presiding officer, and the Republicans the clerk, (the latter a paying office, the former not.) The next difficulty arose when the council proceeded to elect certain municipal officers, collectors, &c. It was impossible, of course, to agree on any one man. Six would vote for the Conservative and six for the Radical nominee. If one of the Radical members happened to be sick, the remaining five absented themselves, thus preventing a quorum, and producing a dead-lock. Under the circumstances, a bill was introduced in the Legislature and passed, granting the presiding officer, in the event of a tie, the right to give the casting vote, he, of course, voting as a member besides.

In regard to the second matter mentioned, I can only say I do not believe what is asserted. It may be that colored men are sometimes too late to vote; and the same may be said of white voters; but that what you say Mr. PLATT asserts is the general rule or practice, I am not prepared to admit. I am sure if such was the case I would be cognizant of the fact, whereas I have no good reason whatever to believe for a moment that the assertion could be sustained by the facts; but, on the other hand, I am convinced from my own limited observation, and more especially from what I am told by others better posted, that no unreasonable delay whatever is made in the case of a negro offering to vote. To this there may be exceptions, but of such exceptions I am not informed.

Very truly, yours, W. H. TAYLOR.

Hon. E. M. BRAXTON, *Washington, D. C.*

"Mr. BRAXTON. I have no comments to make on Colonel Taylor's letter. It speaks for itself; it speaks for the people of Norfolk; and clearly shows that my colleague was inaccurately informed as to the action of the Virginia Legislature of which he complains and criticises.

"Now, Mr. Speaker, as to the charges against the Conservatives of the city of Richmond, what are they? First, they are charged with destroying one of the ballot-boxes at an election held for mayor in that city, when G. W. Chahoon was the Republican candidate. Second, that the judges of election take from fifteen minutes to half an hour to vote a negro, and only thirty seconds to vote a white man, and that hundreds of negroes are deprived of the opportunity of voting by the delay. In reply to these charges I ask that the following communication be read, written by a gentleman of high standing and unquestionable integrity, who resides in the city of Richmond, and therefore has better opportunity than my colleague [Mr. PLATT] or myself of knowing 'what occurs at elections held in that city.'

"The Clerk read as follows:

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, *March* 9, 1872.

MY DEAR SIR: Your note of yesterday, asking the facts relative to the facilities allowed to the respective colors in our city elections, and the amount of colored voters who are kept from the exercise of the elective franchise by the officers of election, was received this morning. I have made the necessary examination of official returns, and assure you that they completely refute the charges of unfairness and official terrorism. I might furnish you with the returns of every election held since the war, but it would needlessly incumber this note, without, in the slightest degree, varying the result. I select, therefore, the first and last election in which respectable people have generally participated in Richmond since the war—the election of 1869, held under the auspices of General Canby, and the general election of last fall. I quote from the official return of Canby as to the first, and from the election returns in my office as to the last:

The registered white vote in 1869, in Richmond, was	7,551
The registered black vote in 1869, in Richmond, was	7,259
White majority	292
The number of white votes cast, was	6,362
The number of black votes cast, was	5,998
White majority	364

In other words, the difference between the white registered majority and the white voting majority was 72, in an aggregate vote cast of 12,360. This election was held under Federal bayonets.

In the last election, November, 1871, the total registered white vote was	7,021
The total registered black vote was	5,894
White registered majority	1,127
The total Conservative vote cast at that election, which is very nearly the measure of the white vote, was	6,227
The total Radical vote	5,241
Conservative majority	986

These figures show that the voting was at least as free as the registration. Now, to demonstrate that the registration was free, compare the total registered white and colored vote respectively with the total white and colored population, and you will find that the blacks register a larger vote in proportion to aggregate population than the whites do, either in Richmond or in any other city in the Union. I have not the census returns; but I defy the investigation. This disposes of the charge of unfairness in this matter. You ask also what ground there is for the accusation that the election officers take from fifteen minutes to half an hour to count a colored vote, while they take less than fifteen seconds to receive a white vote. As you are aware, whites and blacks vote at the same place, and hand their ballots to the same judges of election. There are twenty-one precincts in Richmond, and at the last election eleven thousand four hundred and sixty-eight votes were cast—an average of five hundred and forty-six votes at each precinct. This was at the average rate of sixty votes an hour for each hour of the day at each precinct, or a vote a minute, making no allowance for the long intervals of comparative quiet, the time lost in cases of special challenge, the slowness of voting in the hour that follows sunrise, at the dinner hour, and at other times during the day; nor of the rascally attempts by Radical carpet-baggers to close strong Conservative polls by arresting their judges on false and frivolous charges. You see what utter and shameless recklessness of fact appears in the assertion that a quarter, much less half an hour was occupied in receiving a black vote.

There is not the slightest foundation for the charge that long lines of unvoted blacks are found at the precincts at the closing of the polls deprived of their rights by the malfeasance of officers of election. The above figures of votes cast demonstrate the falsity of this charge; but I speak of my own knowledge when I say that this is not the case. A great many blacks remain around the polls after they close, because there are hundreds here who have nothing else to do. You see them at every loafing place; hundreds of them throng the criminal court of this city every day, out of the same idle curiosity which induces them to hang around a precinct or follow a hand-organ; but the great majority, nearly all of these, have voted, or have tried to vote improperly, and have failed. Very few entitled to vote

fail of the opportunity. They come earliest and stay longest at the polls, there being no Texas Governor here to drive them home. There has been but one public accusation of this sort made in Richmond, and the arrest which followed it was made on affidavits which will be found to be perjuries whenever the case, now eighteen months old, is tried.

The only other inquiry of your letter refers to the destruction of a ballot-box. This has occurred once only in this city. It was alleged, and I believe truly, that the return in that ballot-box would have given an apparent Radical majority, whereas without that return the commissioners gave the Conservative ticket the return. A Conservative judge set aside the return and ordered a new election, and a Conservative bench of appellate judges unanimously sustained him. Whether a Republican Congress would have or would now imitate this action, you know perhaps better than I.

Very respectfully, your friend,

A. M. KEILEY,

Hon. E. M. BRAXTON.

Let me put the charges made by myself and the evidence my colleague brings to refute them side by side, and let me ask any impartial gentleman if my colleague does not prove my case out of the mouth of his own witnesses. I said in regard to the act of the Legislature giving the presiding officer of the Portsmouth council the right to vote twice:

Extract from remarks of Mr. Platt.	*Extract from letter of Mr. Taylor.*
"In the city of Portsmouth, in my district, there is a considerable Republican majority." * * * * "We have in the council six Republicans and six Democrats. Of course under these circumstances nothing could be done. Everything was at a dead lock. There were Republican city officers elected by the people, and the previous Republican council. Well, what did the Legislature of Virginia do? They passed a law giving one of the men in the council two votes, so that by one vote he could produce a tie, and then give a casting and deciding vote; and to-day we have the spectacle presented of six men with seven votes, a state of things produced by the Legislature of Virginia to enable them to carry out partisan ends, and to eject from office the Republicans elected by the people."	"The council of the city of Portsmouth consists of twelve members, six from each of two wards. One ward sent Conservative and the other Republican members, so that the council stood six to six. For a long time no organization could be effected, no president or clerk could be elected, and, indeed, nothing at all done which was calculated to draw party lines. Finally, a compromise was made. It was agreed that the Conservatives should have the presiding officer, and the Republicans the clerk. The next difficulty arose when the council proceeded to elect certain municipal officers. It was impossible, of course, to agree on any one man—six would vote for the Conservative and six for the Radical nominee. If one of the Radical members happened to be sick, the remaining five absented themselves, thus preventing a quorum, and producing a dead lock. Under the circumstances a bill was introduced in the Legislature and passed, granting the presiding officer in the event of a tie the right to give the casting vote, he of course voting as a member besides."

In view of the fact that the letter of Mr. Taylor admits the charge made by me, and in express terms corroborates my statement that by the action of the Legislature one man is given two votes, the language of my colleague following immediately after Colonel Taylor's letter is at least refreshing in its simplicity. He says:

"I have no comments to make on Colonel Taylor's letter. It speaks for itself, and clearly shows that my colleague was inaccurately informed as to the action of the Legislature of which he complains and criticises."

I respectfully submit that if the English language has any meaning at all, then Colonel Taylor's letter proves beyond question that I was correctly informed as to the action of the Virginia Legislature, and stated it correctly. Let me call attention to the equally satisfactory corroboration of my charge in relation to the breaking of the ballot-box in Richmond, as contained in the letter of Mr. Keiley, the mayor of Richmond:

[*Extract from* Mr. PLATT'S *remarks.*]

"The next morning after the election, while the officer of election of one of the wards was proceeding with the box containing the ballots to deposit them with the clerk of the court, he was attacked in broad daylight in the streets of Richmond by men in disguise, the box taken and its contents scattered to the winds."

[*Extract from Mr. Keiley's letter.*]

"The only other inquiry of your letter refers to the destruction of a ballot-box. That has occurred once only in this city. It was alleged, and I believe truly, that the return in that ballot-box would have given an apparent Radical majority; whereas without that return, the commissioners gave the Conservative ticket the return."

But giving my colleague and his party the full benefit of the evidence he brings forward, and which I give entire, I shall proceed to show, to the best of my ability, by facts and evidence to which I challenge successful refutation, that I was warranted in charging the Democratic party of Virginia with high crimes and misdemeanors. I propose to take up my statements, which are denied by my colleague and his correspondents, and to discuss them in the order in which they were made.

My colleague says I have made charges against the city of Norfolk, the city of Portsmouth, the Legislature of Virginia, and the Conservative party of the entire State of Virginia. I deny this. I have made no charges against the cities named. I do make charges against the Democractic party of those cities, and they are all true; and I make charges against the Democratic majority in the Legislature of Virginia, and against the entire Democratic party of the State.

And here let me call the attention of the Democratic associates on this floor of my Democratic Virginia colleagues to the fact that while the latter are willing to associate with them here they are ashamed to own at home the party they act with here; and neither

they or their party have ever dared since the war to come out boldly and manfully and acknowledge the name of Democrat, or to go into a single election on a square, honest issue between Republicanism and Democracy. The party skulks under the name of Conservative, and when you hear that term used you may understand that it means a man who is a Democrat, but is ashamed to acknowledge it. I desire to first call the attention of the House to a brief history of the Democratic party in the city of Richmond since the admission of the State in January, 1870.

I have charged that the Democratic party is in power to-day, and holds the offices of the city of Richmond as a direct consequence of the villiany of ballot-box breaking, and the partisan rulings and action of the judge of the hustings court of that city, together with the subsequent outrage of depriving hundreds of colored men of the right to vote, and the rascally gerrymander by which the city was divided into six wards in the manner I shall presently illustrate. I defy successful contradiction to the statements I am about to make, and I ask the members of both sides of this House to unite with me in denouncing the infamous series of frauds which have disgraced every man connected with them or who has profited by them, which have covered with infamy the party countenancing them, and ought to make every man who attempts to defend them blush with shame.

The political campaign which resulted in the triumph of the Democratic party of Virginia in 1869 and the election of Gilbert C. Walker as Governor of the State was fought and won under false pretenses and by barefaced deception. A few sore-headed and misguided Republicans bolted the regular Republican nominations, and, nominating Walker for Governor, succeeded in inducing Hon. John F. Lewis to permit them the use of his name as a candidate for Lieutenant Governor. The Democrats then abondoned their ticket and rallied to the support of the independent Republican ticket, entering the field under the name of true Republicans, and professing to be better Republicans and more earnest and enthusiastic supporters of the administration of General Grant than the original Republicans themselves.

The State was canvassed thoroughly by their orators, and the people of Virginia solemly assured that the so-called Walker party was the Simon Pure Republican party, and much better Republicans than those who had hitherto claimed the title. Walker himself made stronger Republican speeches than his opponent, Governor Wells. He had a difficult part to perform, but he did it; he performed the difficult feat of riding two horses with more skill than was ever exhibited outside a circus. He had probably read the familiar lines—

> "Honor and fame from no condition rise,
> Act well your part: there all the honor lies."

He had a difficult part to act, but he was equal to it, and succeeded in making the Republicans of the northern States and many in Virginia believe that he was a better Republican than Wells, and the Democrats that he was a better Democrat than Withers, their abandoned candidate. I beg those Republicans who contemplate joining the Cincinnati movement to be warned by our fate in Virginia, and avoid committing the same mistake on a larger scale. Walker and a Democratic Legislature were elected, the State was admitted to representation on this floor, and the Legislature convened. One of its first acts was the passage of the infamous enabling act, by which all the offices of the State were declared vacant, and the Governor authorized to fill them by appointment.

The object of this law was to remove every Republican official in the State and replace them by Democrats, and it was faithfully carried out by the Governor, who proved a plastic tool in their hands, doing all required of him zealously and without question. All the officials of Richmond were Republicans; with perhaps a few insignificant exceptions; they were all removed and Democrats appointed in their places. The May election was approaching, it was important to have every agency in their hands, and they succeeded in getting all the judges and commissioners of elections, all the policemen, and all the registrars. And judges of the courts, nominated on partisan grounds in a caucus of the Democratic members of the Legislature, were elected by that body in strict accordance with the caucus nominations.

With everything in their own hands, the Democratic party of Richmond calmly awaited the May election of 1870. Confident of coming victory, the day arrived, the election was held, a Democratic triumph announced, and the party celebrated its supposed victory by torch-light processions in the evening, marching through the streets of Richmond until late at night, insulting prominent Republicans, stoning the custom-house because it was a Government building, and indulging in other Democratic eccentricities. But they had made one mistake; they had admitted two vigilant Republicans at each precinct to witness the counting of the votes, and quite late in the evening it was discovered, to the utter confusion, surprise, and chagrin of the Democrats, that the Republicans had carried Richmond, and elected all the city officers.

The intelligence spread like wild-fire and soon the Democratic leaders were in council. It was a desperate case; the power they sup-

posed so secure was about to slip from their hands; desperate remedies must be resorted to. They were equal to the occasion, and it was decided that the ballot-box containing the largest number of Republican votes must be destroyed and the Republican candidates, who had been elected by the people at an election declared by the Democratic press of Richmond to be the fairest election ever held in the city, deprived of their certificates.

The plan was faithfully carried out. The law of Virginia requires that after the ballots are counted by the election officers they shall be strung on a string, put in a sealed box, and deposited with the clerk of the hustings court. The box from the third precinct of Jefferson ward contained the largest number of Republican votes, and was therefore selected for destruction; and on the morning after the election, while on his way to the court-room to deposit the ballot-box, the officer of election having it in charge, and being escorted by a police force, was attacked in broad daylight in one of the public streets of Richmond by two disguised men, the box captured without resistance, broken to pieces, and the ballots destroyed.

The facts in regard to the destruction of this ballot-box are well known in Richmond. The men concerned in the transaction are well known. A policeman named Eagleton, who was one of the men detailed to guard the captured box, refused to agree to swear that he knew nothing about it, in case of investigation, and a few nights after, while walking his beat, was shot in the back by a hired assassin. The names of the men who committed this outrage on the ballot-box are well known in Richmond; but so far as I know or can ascertain no attempt has ever been made to arrest or punish them. One of the most notorious ruffians in Richmond publicly threatened to expose the parties concerned unless he was taken care of, and was almost immediately appointed to a lucrative position under the city government.

Although the ballots themselves had been destroyed, the poll-books containing a certificate of the result of the count remained, and there was thus presented to the commissioners of election the certificate of all the judges of election, sworn to and signed, as to the number of votes cast for each member. But incredible as the statement may appear to honest men, it is yet a fact that the Democratic commissioners of election for the city of Richmond threw out the vote of the third precinct of Jefferson ward, on the ground that the law had not been complied with, as the ballots had not been deposited with the clerk of the hustings court, and gave the election and the certificates to the Democratic candidates. I have no comments to make on the closing paragraph of the letter of the mayor of Richmond, as given in my colleague's remarks, except to repeat it here and to ask honorable gentlemen to examine it in connection with facts I am about to state and draw their own conclusions. Mr. Keiley says:

> "A Conservative judge set aside the return and ordered a new election, and a Conservative bench of appellate judges unanimously sustained him. Whether a Republican Congress would have or would now imitate this action you know perhaps better than I."

I have stated that the commissioners gave the certificate of election to the Democratic candidates. Mr. Keiley says a Conservative judge set aside this return and ordered a new election. Let us see how he did it. The Republican candidates sought the only means of redress in their power. They brought suit before the judge of the hustings court, who by law had sole jurisdiction in the case. A decision was delayed until the defeated Democratic candidates had qualified on the certificates of election issued to them and taken possession of the offices.

Then this Conservative judge decided that the election should be set aside not that the Republicans who were clearly entitled to the offices should have them, but that a new election should be had, and that he would appoint men to hold the offices in the mean time. The defeated Democratic candidates who had obtained possession of the offices had friends appointed who, it had been previously arranged, should not qualify. The law required them to qualify within thirty days after appointment, or the incumbents held over, and to make assurance doubly sure this Conservative judge made these *ad interim* appointments at night, and before the next morning had left the State, and remained absent until after the thirty days had expired, and the defeated Democratic candidates held the offices until the ensuing election in November, when with one or two exceptions they were reëlected, their party in the mean time having made arrangements to insure a Democratic victory; and to render impossible a disappointment, such as they had experienced in May, at this election every possible impediment was thrown in the way of colored men to prevent them from voting.

I present and ask to have read from the Clerk's desk extracts from the testimony taken before United States Commissioner J. W. Jenkins, at the preliminary hearing in the case of a man named Hagan, an election officer at the third precinct of Jefferson ward, during the election of November, 1870. The Clerk will please read the extracts which I have marked, being from affidavits made by Thomas Hollins, esq., Hon. Rush Burgess, B. W. Gillis, esq., and Hon. L. H. Chandler, gentlemen widely and favorably known, and with a large personal acquaintance among the members of

this House. The other extracts I will ask to have printed with my remarks.

The Clerk read as follows:

Extracts from testimony given under oath before United States Commissioner Jenkins, in the Hagan case:

"Thomas Hallins testified before Commissioner Jenkins in the Hogan case:

"I was present at the election in Jefferson ward on the 8th of November, 1870; was acting as a judge of election. I protested against receiving the returns of that precinct, because a large number of voters, four hundred or more, were prevented from voting by asking unnecessary questions by John Hagan, jr., one of the judges of election. By asking these questions he prevented four hundred or more registered voters from voting. At no time in the day were there less than two hundred voters waiting to vote. In my judgment a free and full exercise of the elective privilege was not allowed to one half of the voters of that precinct.

"Michael Lanam testified in same case and same time:

"I was clerk of third precinct, Jefferson ward; the voting was retarded by unnecessary questions asked of known Republicans, white and colored, by Windom Rogers, Benjamin Shepard, and P. H. Sutherland, who took supreme control of the precinct. At no time were there less than one hundred voters in waiting during the day.

"P. Nichols also testified to the conduct of the same persons; and also said they retarded voting by asking improper questions, as to the voter's exact age, the places they moved from, although the answers given compared exactly with the statement in the register's book.

"Rush Burgess testified:

"I was at the third voting precinct, Jefferson ward, about three o'clock; outside of the door there was a long line of colored voters in double and triple file, on one side of a trestle bench placed in the center of the door; white men were on the other side; they were permitted to vote alternately; noticed one exception: a colored man, after being asked a great many questions, was sent away to point out his house; a white man was voted when he left and when he came back.

"B. W. Gillis testified:

"I was present at the polls, third precinct, Jefferson ward, from before two o'clock till after five o'clock. My attention was called to a carpenter's bench in the center of the doorway. A line of about twelve or fifteen white men was on the right side of the bench; on the left side was a line of about one hundred and fifty feet, two or three deep, of colored voters. The voting of the colored men was very slow, and, I think, by my watch, in a great many instances the time occupied to vote a single voter was seven minutes. Heard Mr. Hagan ask a great many questions that seemed to be frivolous and uncalled for. Mr. Hagan called out a few minutes before closing the polls that if there were any white voters to send them in. There were two hundred to two hundred and fifty colored voters waiting to vote when the polls closed.

"L. H. Chandler testified:

"I was at the third precinct about two o'clock; a large number of colored persons were in line; there was no voting when I got there; they voted in two lines; a railing or division was made from the center of the voting door; the whites all voted on the right-hand side and the colored on the left. There was a constable and a police officer stationed at the door. The manner of voting was this: one white man was allowed to vote, and then one colored man, only one being allowed to vote at the same time, and only one man was questioned at the same time. I went out and counted the colored persons in line that had not voted, and there were two hundred and fifty-three or two hundred and fifty-five. I then counted the white men in line, and there were four or five; there were in all about twenty-five white men in the vicinity. When the polls closed, there were twelve or fifteen white men there, and myself and three or four others counted the colored men who had not voted, and there were two hundred and fifty-one or two hundred and fifty-three; I am confident there were more then than when I first counted. The voting was very slow. Voters were asked, 'What street do you live on?' 'What is your number?' 'What business do you follow?' 'How old are you now?' 'How old were you when you registered?' In one instance it took a colored man seven minutes to vote, in another instance three minutes. There was a manifest disposition on the part of the commissioners to make a distinction in this respect between white and colored voters.

"Gabriel Ford testified:

"I voted at that precinct; there were two lines, white and black. I voted at half past four o'clock; only one or two voted after me. I did not see any whites voting at that time; when I voted there were about two hundred colored voters in the line.

"Wilson Price testified:

"I went to the precinct at six o'clock a. m. and waited till nine o'clock a. m.; returned at twelve noon, and remained till closing of polls; was unable to get a chance to vote. If no white voters were in attendance, no colored voter was permitted to vote.

"David Fraser testified:

"I was at this voting place from five o'clock a. m. till the polls closed, and could not get a chance to deposit my vote. I know that not less than forty colored men stood in line from sunrise to sunset and could not vote because the managers would not allow them to approach the polls. I counted at the close of the polls two hundred and fifty-three colored voters in line who could not vote, besides a large number outside of the line.

"G. L. Bosher testified:

"I was at the polls, third precinct, from the opening to the close; there was a large number of colored voters present with their tickets waiting to vote during the whole day, who failed to vote; I should judge there were between two and three hundred men in line after the polls closed who had no chance to deposit their votes; some of these men I know personally, and know that they were waiting from morning till night.

"Robert Oliver testified:

"I stood in the line of colored voters near the door from sunrise till sunset, and could not get a chance to cast my vote. There were two lines of voters, one colored the other white. John Hagan, who seemed to have entire control of the polls, would not permit any colored voter to vote unless there was a white voter there, thereby depriving me and a large number of colored voters of the right to vote when there was ample time to vote them all. Three hundred colored voters were in line when the polls closed who were deprived of voting.

"A. J. Terry testified:

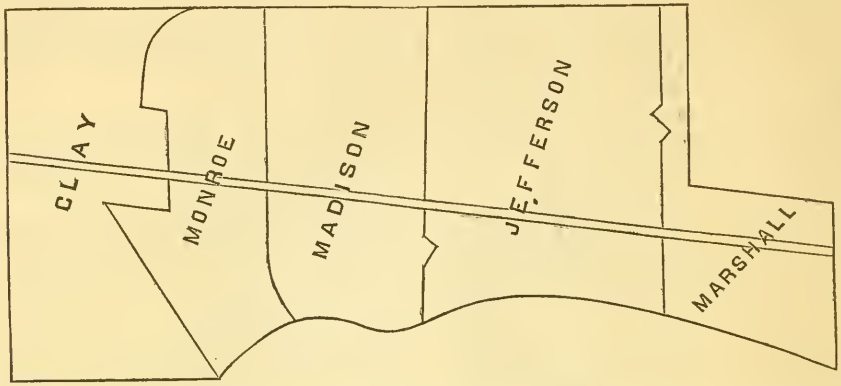
"I was in attendance at that voting place all day. At least two hundred and fifty colored men were in line all day endeavoring to vote, and had to leave when the polls closed without voting. The process of taking the ballots from colored voters was so slow that it took a colored man ten hours to advance from the gutter to the door where the ballots were received.

"Spencer Graig testified:

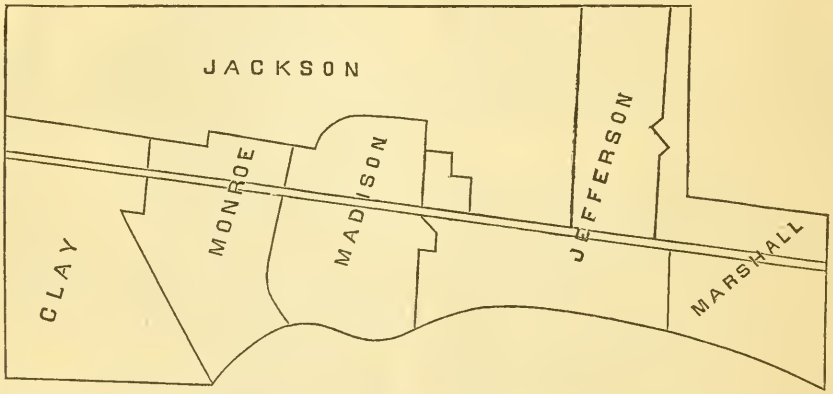
"I was a legal voter of the third precinct; I was in the line with others from eight o'clock a. m. until the closing of the polls at night, and could not get a chance to vote; there were at least two hundred and fifty colored voters who failed as I did."

Mr. PLATT. Now, Mr. Speaker, I respectfully submit that I have proved conclusively that I was warranted in saying that hundreds of men had been deprived of the right to vote by the Democratic party in the city of Rich-

mond, and I come now to the election of 1871, when these same men, with few exceptions, whom we have seen obtaining office through the broken ballot-box are again declared elected. Fearing that they were not fully secured in their lease of power, authority was obtained from the Legislature of Virginia to redistrict the city, which then consisted of five wards evenly and fairly divided. As more effective than words, I have had a diagram prepared showing how this was done. The sketch now being held up by the Clerk shows the city of Richmond as divided into wards before the gerrymander,



And the sketch he now holds up shows the same city as divided into wards by the gerrymander.



Bear in mind that each ward is given the same number of representatives in the city council. The city, by the new arrangement, is divided into six wards instead of five as before. Nearly or quite one third of the entire city is comprised in Jackson ward, which contains a large majority of the colored voters of the city, who are thus robbed of the right of representation guarantied them by the Constitution of the United States and that of the State. This is a fair sample of the gerrymandering process to which the cities of Virginia have been subjected by a Democratic Legislature, of the gerrymander of the State in legislative districts, and now of the State into congressional districts, the latter being considered infamous by some of my Democratic colleagues, even, and some of them at least are prepared to join me in denouncing it.

I neglected to state that the Republican candidates who it is claimed were defeated at the November election, in 1870 are yet struggling in the courts in a vain endeavor to have justice done them. I wanted to take up the Chahoon case and ventilate that chapter of Democratic infamy. If my colleague thinks I shrink from

discussing that question he is mistaken; I shall be only too happy to have the opportunity. I do not believe there is one honest man in Richmond who believes that George W. Chahoon was guilty of the charges upon which he was three times tried by infamously packed juries. Every decent Democrat I have ever conversed with who knows anything about the case is open and unreserved in his denunciation of the villainous conspiracy against him, and as I believe in a just and righteous God, I believe his persecutors will yet be made to answer for their wickedness in this case.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have established all I have charged against the Democratic party of Richmond. Permit me to ask your attention for a few minutes while I answer my colleague's correspondent from Norfolk; and the time allotted me is drawing so rapidly to an end that I must confine myself to the reading of statements furnished me by citizens of Norfolk of character and standing. I send to the Clerk's desk to have read the following statement from John F. Dezendorf, esq., and a communication received from Republicans of Norfolk.

The Clerk read as follows:

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA, *March* 30, 1872.

DEAR SIR: Your speech in Congress relative to the proscription exercised against the members of the Republican party in the cities and counties of this State, was eminently just and true, and the thanks of the Republicans of this city are tendered to you for the fearless manner in which you have always exposed the wrong-doings of the Democraty party of this State to the consideration of the Congress of the United States.

At all the elections held in this city subsequent to the admission of the State into the Union, a separate voting precinct has been established for white and black voters, with a separate ballot-box for each. There is no authority for this discrimination in the State law, and it is a clear violation of the act of Congress commonly known as the "enforcement act." This, coupled with the fact that the judges and commissioners of election are composed (with two exceptions, and they at white precincts) wholly of Democrats or Conservatives, which is another name for the same thing, notwithstanding that prominent Republicans, property-owners, and men in every way above reproach have been recommended to the judge of the corporation court of the city, with the request that at least one Republican may be appointed as judge or commissioner at each precinct, which request has been refused, presents unbounded opportunity for intimidation and fraud. The colored polls are beset with men who browbeat and intimidate the colored voters in the most outrageous manner, and are not prevented or hindered from so doing by the judges of election.

The colored voters have propounded to them the most irrelevant and preposterous questions, put for the purpose of consuming the time and confusing the voter; and in many instances ten, fifteen, and twenty minutes have thus been consumed, and the voter then refused because, being confused, he has made a mistake of a year in his age, or on some other trifling and frivolous pretense.

Two years ago the city of Norfolk was redistricted, by order of the council, in order, as it was claimed, that the wards might have an equal population, but in reality for partisan purposes, as the sequel developed. For, as soon as the redistricting was accomplished, a new apportionment of councilmen was ordered, and although the population in each ward was now the same, the wards known to to be Democratic were given each eight councilmen; one ward then considered doubtful was given seven, while the fourth ward, known to be largely Republican, and which is popularly termed "Africa" by the Democrats, was given but five members; a plain violation of the State constitution, which provides "that representation shall be based upon population;" and the population of the wards being equal, they were entitled to equal representation in the city council.

After this redistricting of the city a new registration was ordered, although there was no authority or law for the same in the statutes of the State, which provide that the registration lists shall be opened fifteen days previous to the election for revision, at which time those may be added who have become voters since the previous election, and transfers may be given from one voting precinct to another. But an entire new registration was ordered, and in consequence many Republicans, colored men, who were working in the swamps outside the city, failed to register, and their names do not appear upon the new lists, and although they were duly registered at the first and only legal registration ever held—those held fifteen days previous to elections being supplementary thereto—when they now apply to vote they are refused, and at the last election several were sent to jail for attempting to vote without being duly registered. The State law provides an oath upon which a man whose vote is challenged may vote, which, although many Democrats were voted upon it, was denied in many instances to colored Republicans.

In consequence of the delays and intimidations to which the colored voters are subjected in every election, there have been numbers who, have not come to the polls at all, and many who after having stood at the polls all day with the ballots in their hand, have been unable to vote. At the election two years ago this spring over two hundred colored men were at the polls with the ballots in their hands when the polls closed without having voted. Nor is this proscription confined to colored men. White men who dare to be Republicans are shamefully insulted and abused at the polls, and maliciously slandered and vilified through the columns of the Democratic press.

The most unblushing frauds have been perpetrated. At the election held in November last, at the white precinct of the second ward in this city, ninety-seven more ballots were found in the ballot-box than were names on the poll-book, and the utmost partisanship was displayed in the withdrawal of these fraudulant votes, in order to make the ballots and the books correspond. Out of the ninety-seven ballots withdrawn, thirty-one were Republican, while the entire Republican vote of that precinct is but about ninety and the Democratic is some five hundred. At the colored precinct in the same ward voting was carried on for some two hours without having the ballot-box locked or in any way secured.

Nor does the proscription end here. Every obstacle is thrown in the way of Republicans elected to office, qualifying and taking possession of the same. At the May election in this city in 1871 the Republicans elected about one half of the city officers, including the city collector, street inspector, and others. The gentlemen elected to these positions were native Virginians, but they were Republicans, and consequently had to resort to the courts to get possession of their offices. The bonds were increased, and every obstacle thrown in the way to prevent their qualifying, and the collector did not obtain possession of his office until the taxes for that year had nearly all been collected. "When the milk had been extracted from the cocoanut," the shell was thrown to him. The same thing took place in Norfolk county, where the county treasurer was required to give bond in $100,000, an unprecedently large amount, and after having done so and added thereto $10,000 on his own motion, he is still kept out of his office, and will have to resort to the courts for redress.

The Democratic press of the cities of this State, and particularly in Norfolk, are responsible for the state of things that exist here. The "social ku-kluxism," which, if not as fatal to life as that "ku-kluxism" which exists in more southern latitudes, is very damaging to the interests of the city, State, and country.

The facts which I have here brought to your notice are abundantly capable of proof, and can be substantiated by affidavits of responsible parties, should the same be necessary.

And in the cases of the keeper and physician of the almshouse, although duly elected by the people at an election held in accordance with the State laws, and in reference to which the Democratic party made up their ticket, including candidates for the above offices, after taking the advice of the most learned legal counsel in the city, these officers elected upon the Republican ticket at said election were, after having held the offices several months, thrust from office on the plea that the new charter of the city gave the appointment to the city council, and Democrats were accordingly appointed to these positions in the place of the Republicans elected at a legal election, having received a large majority of the popular vote.

Again thanking you in the name of the Republican party of this city for your noble defense of Republicans, and your truthful statement of the indignities and abuse to which they are subjected by reason of their devotion to principle, I am truly yours,

JOHN F. DEZENDORF,
Chairman Executive Committee of Norfolk.

Hon. JAMES H. PLATT, *M. C., Second Congressional District of Virginia, Washington, D. C.*

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District of Columbia, County of Washington, ss:

Be it known that John F. Dezendorf personally appeared before me in said District, and being by me duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that the statements in the foregoing paper are true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Witness my hand and seal this 4th day of April, 1872.

R. H. MARSH,
[L. S.] *Notary Public.*

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NORFOLK, *March* 21, 1872.

DEAR SIR: At a meeting of the National Republican Club, held at their rooms on the 21st instant, the inclosed letter was unanimously adopted, and the president was directed to forward you a copy, which you may use as you may see proper.

Respectfully, yours,

JAMES H. HALL,
President Republican Club.

Hon. JAMES H. PLATT, M. C., *Washington, District of Columbia.*

—

NORFOLK, *March* 21, 1872.

We, the undersigned Republicans and citizens of Norfolk, Virginia, fully corroborate the statement made by you in the House of Representatives as published in the Norfolk Journal of this date, as true in all respects, as far as this city is concerned, notwithstanding the letter read by Hon. E. M. BRAXTON, M. C., of the seventh congressional district, from Hon. W. H. Taylor, of the senate of Virginia.

We were present at the various voting precincts at several elections, and especially at the election held on the fourth Thursday of May, 1870, and witnessed the abuses practiced upon the colored voters, and are satisfied that when the polls closed at sundown at least one hundred and fifty to two hundred colored men had to go home without recording their votes for the Republican party.

JAMES H. HALL, *President.*
WILLIAM T. BELL, *Secretary.*

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The above was indorsed by the entire club, numbering sixty or more present at the time.

Respectfully,

WILLIAM T. BELL, *Secretary.*

Mr. PLATT. Now, sir, in regard to Portsmouth, I send to the Clerk's desk and ask to have read a communication from a reliable and well-known citizen of that city, and I vouch for the truth of the statement made by him.

The Clerk read as follows:

PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA, *March* 20, 1872.

DEAR SIR: By request of P. G. Thomas, mayor, I will endeavor to give you the facts asked for in yours of the 18th.

First, in relation to the murder of John Wilson. On the Saturday night following the election for members of the Legislature, (in which the Democrats succeeded by reason of the Republicans running two candidates,) the Democratic party had a torchlight procession, in which were a number of rowdies from Norfolk and also the rough element of Portsmouth. They were outrageous in their behavior on the streets, causing even Democratic saloon-keepers to close their doors. After the procession reached the court-house, and the speaking commenced, a large number of those carrying torches came down the street yelling and whooping, and disturbing the peace generally. Policeman John Wilson (who was a gentleman in manners) approached them and very kindly asked them to preserve the peace, telling them he had no desire to arrest any one, but was compelled to do his duty, and hoped they would go along quietly.

The party surrounded Wilson, and several raised the cry of kill the damned nigger. One of the party placed a pistol close to the back of Wilson's head and fired, the ball entering back of and below the left ear, ranging up into the brain. He immediately fell and expired. The crowd kicked Wilson after he fell; some of them also struck him with their torches. One young man (Hamilton) testified that he got over the body of Wilson and told the crowd that he (Hamilton) was a Democrat, but such conduct was shameful and would bring disgrace on the party.

This foul murder took place on the principal street, between two corner stores, with at least a hundred people within one hundred feet. I heard of the murder shortly after it happened, and at once started for the scene of action. Several friends tried to detain me, fearing some harm would befall me. I told them I thought there was no danger. I went up High street and found the body of Wilson had been removed to the station-house, whither I proceeded and sent for Coroner Matthews, who impaneled a jury, I being one of them.

The evidence identified a number of persons as being present among the disturbers of the peace and among the crowd who committed the murder. Several parties swore they could recognize the person who fired the shot could they see him again, but that they did not know his name, but that he lived in Norfolk. One man, I think, testified that his name was Johnson. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Thomas Flood, John Bullock, Thomas Finly, and Charles Brown. It was proven conclusively that Flood and Bullock were in the crowd of peace disturbers, and also in the Democratic procession.

The day after the murder Mayor Thomas received information that the person who fired the shot was identified, and that he resided in Norfolk. A warrant was immediately issued, and placed in the hands of officers Brown and Wilson, after being countersigned by Mayor Whitehead, of Norfolk, who sent a Norfolk policeman to assist them.

The officers were followed by a crowd of Norfolk firemen to the residence of the accused, when the Norfolk officer walked off. The rowdies and firemen then threatened the Portsmouth officers, and intimidated them to such an extent that they returned to Portsmouth, believing their lives in danger. Mayor Thomas then made a formal complaint to Mayor Whitehead, of Norfolk, who promised to have the accused if he was to be found; but the bird had flown and has not been seen since, to

my knowledge. The facts were plain that the Democratic party sympathized with the murderers; but I must say that I believe nine out of ten of our citizens were sorry it occurred.

Second, at the election for members of the city council while the Republicans carried the city on the popular vote, the Democrats carried one of the wards,(Jackson,) thus making a tie in the council and causing a dead-lock (I was one of the Republican members.) We met at various times for some three months without being able to organize. Finally we agreed upon a compromise which gave the Democrats the president of the council, while we retained the clerk; city officers to remain as they were, unless vacancies occurred by death, malfeasance, or resignation. This was considered fair, and was all that was necessary for practical legislation.

After some time, without agitation of the subject in the city, no application or petition from any known source, the Legislature passed an act amending the city charter by making six members of the council a quorum, giving the president one vote to make a tie and another one to decide the question; thus giving the minority representation full legislative power.

Under the operation of this act all the rules of the council were suspended, and six men, representing the smallest ward in the city, refused to record the votes of the six men representing the largest ward. I appealed to the president, who had been chosen by compromise, and he decided virtually that by his casting vote he had the power to refuse to record my vote, as a member of the city council, unless I voted for a man nominated by one of the Democratic members; and he did so refuse to record my vote. The Republican members were mere head-pieces. Their power as members were entirely taken away. This act of injustice was so glaring that I have heard life-long Democrats denounce it; and I know of some men who have left that party because of it.

You will perceive the action of the Legislature could possibly have no motive except the temporary control of the paltry patronage of a bankrupt city for the Democracy. Had they sought to remedy a defect in the charter they would have provided for future contingencies; but they have not done so, and a tie in the council hereafter would forever prevent an organization, because no party would give one man of the opposite party full legislative power such as the president of the city council has under this act of the Virginia Legislature.

I have tried to give you a succinct statement; would go more into detail did I deem it necessary. I am willing to make affidavit to the truth of what is here stated at any time; and should you want information on any one point, you will either state it or telegraph for me to come to Washington.

Yours, truly,

JAMES H. CLEMENTS.

Hon. JAMES H. PLATT, *M. C.*

Mr. PLATT. And now, sir, a few words only in reply to the statements of my colleague in relation to his own district. He says:

"As to the charge of intimidation practiced by the Conservative party in the State of Virginia, I only have proof as to one of the congressional districts; and I here say that the charge, so far as the district that I represent is involved, is utterly unfounded, and I believe it to be untrue as to every district in the State. Sir, the seventh district was scoured by a United States commissioner and an attorney-at-law after the last congressional election. It was hunted all over before the election by white and black men who were paid by the executive Republican committee in this city to canvass, as they termed it, but in fact to search up something to sustain a contest determined on weeks before the election for the seat that I now have; and all that could be found to sustain the charge of intimidation was one poor, idiotic negro, who, when asked by the commissioner, 'What is an oath?' answered, 'It is what you see, and what you know.'"

I find, on turning to page 26 of House Miscellaneous Report No. 35, containing the testimony taken in the case of McKenzie *vs.* Braxton, that the testimony of the idiotic negro referred to by my colleague is there reported. He swears that a man named Steward Thomas told him at Criglersville precinct the day of election that he had voted against him once, and that if he did it again he must leave, or he (Thomas) would put a ball in him. This ignorant man was certainly a legal voter, and at least had sufficient mental capacity to understand that voting for Mr. McKenzie was dangerous business at that precinct. This document contains other testimony, the evidence of gentlemen of intelligence, and whose character for truth and veracity has never been assailed. My colleague seems to have forgotten those statements, when making the broad and sweeping declaration in regard to his own district I have quoted above.

I desire to refer to some facts shown clearly by the evidence as reported. I call the attention of my colleague to the deposition of Mr. John J. Robinson, on page 17, who swears that because he advocated the Republican ticket he was threatened with being mobbed; that he was actually attacked in the county of Madison, in my colleague's district; that his life was imperiled. So great was the danger that he had to call on a peace officer for protection, and finally flee the place to save his life.

The testimony of Thomas Monroe, on page 21, shows that because he was legitimately working in the interest of the Republican party he was attacked and fired upon by his assailants, and only saved his life by flight and refuge in a thick wood.

The testimony of R. D. Beekley, on pages 33 and 34, show that at a Republican meeting at the court-house of the county of Culpepper the most riotous proceedings were resorted to by the political friends of my colleague, consisting in part, in the language of deponent, "Sticks were raised, stones were thrown. Oliver (one of the Republican speakers) was yelled at with cries of 'The damned nigger shall not speak here, down with the negro,'" and severe threats; and because of these proceedings, other speakers were afraid to venture on the stand. Both Mr. Beekley and Mr. Oliver are well known to me personally. They are among the most intelligent colored men of the country. Gentlemanly in deportment and character, no one who knows them would doubt any statement they would make on or off the witness stand.

The depositions of Robert Allen, C. W. Holland, and others, on pages 28, 29, and 30, show that they and others who desired to vote the Republican ticket were prevented from so doing by the action of the partisan conductors of the election in failing to open the polls as required by law, this being a

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favorite way of preventing Republican majorities being given, frequently practiced in various portions of the State at precincts with large Republican majorities.

This is a sin of omission for which the State law provides no penalty, therefore oftener resorted to than sins of commission, but never practiced at any point having a Democratic majority. My colleague has been misinformed in regard to men hunting all over his district before the election for evidence of fraud and intimidation, and evidence to use in a predetermined-upon contest for his seat in this body. I certify that not one cent was paid to any one by the congressional executive committee for canvassing in my colleague's district, nor was any person employed by that committee in any capacity or for any purpose in that district. As the secretary of that committee I am certain of the incorrectness of that statement as made by my colleague, and assure him that on this point at least he has been misinformed.

Since the publication of my remarks on the 6th of March I have received from many portions of Virginia letters and affidavits in regard to outrages by the Democratic party, which show that they are by no means confined to the localities to which I have given special attention in my remarks to-day. I have neither the time or the inclination to dwell further upon these unpleasant topics. I should much prefer to praise, were it possible to do so honestly. I cheerfully testify that there are counties in the State where the two parties dwell together in peace and harmony, and where the members of the Democratic party show fairness and toleration. I believe the sentiment of liberality and toleration for differences of political opinion is growing and extending, and it will be a blessed day for Virginia when in all localities men shall cease to be persecuted and ostracised in business and society because of their political opinions. God knows how earnestly I desire the prosperity of my State and the happiness of her people, earnestly believing as I do that neither can be realized until perfect freedom of opinion is tolerated. I do most urgently beg all good men to unite for the purpose of securing it. The Republican party only ask that every man twenty-one years of age should be allowed to vote once, as his conscience shall dictate, unless he forfeits that right by a criminal act. We ask this for ourselves, and we will do as much to secure it to our opponents as we will to secure it to ourselves. I have only kind feelings for my Democratic colleagues on this floor. They have at all times extended to me courteous and gentlemanly treatment, which I have endeavored to reciprocate. I regret that I have been forced into this controversy. I regret that they should deny or attempt to defend the crimes of the Virginia Democracy, and believe they have been led into such a course by the force of evil associations on this floor with the party that for so long a time denied and defended the crimes of the Ku Klux. I would that I could influence them to break away from their present political associations and induce them to join me in placing our beloved State in harmony with the ruling party of the country, and working with me through the only party that can help us to restore Virginia to the proud position she once held but has now lost. How can they study the history of Virginia for the forty years she has been under the rule of Democracy and affiliate longer with a party which has brought our State, step by step, down the declining grade of poverty and ruin, until we have almost found that "lowest deep," depicted in the impassioned language of Milton? How can any man who loves Virginia remain in a party that has brought upon her only ruin, degradation, poverty, debt, and excessive taxation until it has almost ended in dishonor and repudiation; whose record in Virginia is one long unbroken history of blundering folly and adherence to wrong-doing? But if they are hopelessly joined to their idols, as I fear they are, then let them unite with me and my colleagues on this side of the House in our efforts to prevent and punish wrong-doing by whichever party committed. I pledge them my earnest efforts to remedy any wrongs my own party may commit. Let them try as earnestly to cause a cessation of those I have pointed out as existing in the party to which they belong, and in all questions not political affecting our State I am certain that in the future, as in the past, we shall work together harmoniously, only striving to excel each other in the effort to do, each, more than the other for the material good of the State we represent, and for the happiness and prosperity of the people among whom our lot is cast and with whom all my interests are as intimately interwoven and as inseparably allied as are those of any citizen of the old State of which we are all so proud and all love so well.

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